

DEC 1951 51-48

NAVY Declassification/Release Instructions 2005/06/07 : CIA-RDP80-00809A000500640247-5
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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
INFORMATION REPORT

COUNTRY Ecuador

SUBJECT Ports of Guayaquil/Puerto Bolívar/Water Depths/
Port Requirements and Facilities

PLACE ACQUIRED
(BY SOURCE)

DATE ACQUIRED
(BY SOURCE)

DATE (OF INFO.)

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REPORT NO. [REDACTED]

RESPONSIVE TO	
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CD NO.	
[REDACTED]	
DAS NO.	
OCI NO.	

DATE DISTR. 28 Sep 54

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SOURCE

The Office of Naval Intelligence furnished the following information to CIA for IAC dissemination in accordance with paragraph 3(c), NSCID 7. (DIO-11ND Conf reports Nos 382-54 and 383-54)

Guayaquil

- Hydrographic Conditions: Guayaquil is not a particularly difficult port to enter although HO Pub. #174 Sailing Directions South America Volume III, states it is a difficult port for large cargo ships to enter. The least water encountered is over the bar between Punta Alcatraz and Isla Mondragón. There is 22 feet at high water over this bar. We try to load to a depth of from 19 to 20.5 feet and on an even keel before crossing the bar. The bar is crossed only at high water. The river runs upstream at a rate of 4.5 to 5 knots at flood tide. Barges drift up the river with the flood tide and beach when slack water comes.
- Pilotage: The pilot was picked up approximately three hours before high water at buoy #5, which is below Puna. No two pilots ever went up or down the river exactly the same way. Pilots are reluctant to give out much hydrographic information. Pilots are quite competent.
- Anchorage: While working cargo at anchorage in the river off the cathedral, which is shown on HO Chart 5943, it is necessary to keep the engines turning slowly against the tide. The area immediately below "water main" (shown on HO Chart 5943) and on a line with Estro de Santay (shown on HO Chart 5948) is not a safe anchorage area. There is a strong undertow in this area which tends to pull a ship towards the west bank of the river.
- Cargo Handling: There are two belt conveyors on barges that are used for loading bananas. There are numerous small craft available that are used as lighters. At one time there were a total of 45 small craft, loaded with bananas, around the ship. This blocked river traffic. Banana loading is done as fast as at any banana port.

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Puerto Bolívar

5. Hydrographic Information: I found the navigational aids in the approach to Puerto Bolívar quite dependable, although the buoys tend to shift their positions somewhat as the wind shifts. I believe that this shifting is due to the fact that these buoys have an excessive amount of chain. There is a minimum of 32 feet at low water across the bar. This is the least water encountered entering Puerto Bolívar. (HO Pub. No. 174, Sailing Directions South America Volume III gives a minimum of 24 feet.)
6. Pier: There is a very small pier at Puerto Bolívar that amounts to nothing more than a few planks laid on a wooden framework. There are no railroad tracks on this pier. It is not suitable for berthing ships.
7. Cargo Handling: The principal cargo exported from Puerto Bolívar is bananas. These bananas are either lightered down from up the river or are brought in on the railroad. I do not know where this railroad goes, but I believe it just runs back into the banana plantations in the interior. There are no cranes or belt loaders at this port. Stevedores physically carry the bananas aboard.
8. Tugs and Lighters: There are numerous small craft, including large dugout canoes, that are used for lighters. There are towboats for towing lighters. Large cargo ships can enter and leave the port without the assistance of tugs.

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LIBRARY SUBJECT AND AREA CODES

C-02-0615

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